

President Wilson went before Congress in joint session on April 2, 1917, and asked for a declaration of war against Germany. Eoosevelt, who was on his way back from Florida, stopped at Washington and called upon the President for the purpose of congratulating him on his address, but the President was at a Cabinet meeting and Eoosevelt, being unable to wait for the meeting to adjourn, did not see him. He published a statement on the same day, in which he said:

"The President's message is a great state paper which will rank in history with the great state papers of which Americans in future years will be proud. It now rests with the people of the country to see that we put in practice the policy that the President has outlined and that we strike as hard, as soon, and as efficiently as possible in aggressive war against the Government of Germany.

"We must send troops to the firing line as rapidly as possible. Defensive war is hopeless. We must by vigorous offensive warfare win the right to have our voice count for civilization and justice when the time for peace comes.

"I, of course, very earnestly hope that I may be allowed to raise a division for immediate service at the front."

In a statement which was published on April 5, 1917, Eoosevelt said:

"The American people believe that we owe it to ourselves and to the national honor to send a fighting force of at least an army corps under the American flag to the

front at the earliest moment. This army corps should be commanded by one of our first-class Major Generals. It might consist of three or perhaps only two divisions. I have asked permission to raise a division which would be in this army and under its commander."

On April 9, 1917, Eoosevelt went to Washington and had an interview with the President by appointment. In a statement which he made to the reporters from the steps of the White House after the interview, he said he had sought to